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Letter dated 1 November 2006 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the comprehensive ceasefire agreement, signed on 7 September 2006 by the Government of Burundi and Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu-Forces nationales de libération (Palipehutu-FNL). On 13 October, I received a letter from the South African Facilitation of the Burundi peace process. In that letter, the Facilitation requested the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) to provide assistance, until the end of December 2006, to carry out some of the tasks envisaged under the agreement for the African Union special task force. These tasks include the provision of escorts to returning FNL leaders, as well as for FNL combatants, as they move to designated assembly areas.

According to the Facilitation, the African Union Force is expected to start deploying in November 2006. In this regard, ONUB logistical support during the deployment of the African Union Force was also requested.

For the above purpose, the Facilitation asked the United Nations to adjust slightly the withdrawal schedule of the remaining ONUB military contingents, which were expected to depart in November and December 2006, as outlined in my sixth report to the Security Council on ONUB (S/2006/163). On 31 October, the United Nations received a similar request from the Government of Burundi.

I concur with the requests of the Government and the Facilitation, which, it is hoped, could help assure the early and uninterrupted implementation of the agreement. It is therefore my intention to extend for a few weeks the deployment in Burundi of ONUB's remaining two infantry battalions and supporting military units. This slight adjustment would not affect the expiration of the overall mandate of ONUB on 31 December 2006, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1692 (2006).

The troop-contributing countries concerned (Kenya, Nepal, Pakistan, South Africa and Thailand) have been preliminarily notified of my intention. I am also exploring the possibility of accommodating the additional costs associated with the adjusted withdrawal time frame, to the extent possible, from within the current budget of the Mission.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

06-60596 (E) 081106